THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House to the extent available.

Entitlement of free local calls for ocfficers

2875. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that since 1982, officers eligible for residential telephones are entitled to 650 free local calls on bi-monthly basis; and

(b) whether Government propose to review the matter and raise the limit of 650 calls;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

Training to representatives of Panchayats

†2876. SHRI LAXMINARAYAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the details of schemes being run by Central Government to create awareness among the representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions and members of the Standing Committees of Gram Sabha;

(b) the ratio of the share of Central Government and the State Governments in the amount provided, if any, by Central Government for imparting training to the representatives of Panchayats; and

(c) whether Central Government are contemplating to enhance its own share?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The name of the scheme being run by Central Government to create awareness among the representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions and Members of the Standing Committees of Gram Sabha is "Panchayat Development & Training". The budget provision for Panchayat Development and Training for the year 2005-06 is Rs. 29.40 crore.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) Under the scheme, the total approved cost of proposal received from the States is shared in the ratio of 75:25 between Central and State Governments.

(c) No. Sir.

Working of Panchayats in Bihar

2877. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the *modus operandi* of implementation of Panchayati Raj in Bihar;

(b) the mechanism to ensure that the Panchayats deliver goods;

(c) the mechanism to ensure accountability of Panchayats; and

(d) the difficulties being encountered in implementation of Panchayati Raj in Bihar?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Elections to the Panchayats could be held only in April, 2001 because of long pending court cases relating to reservations as the Hon'ble Patna High Court had struck down provisions relating to reservation of seats for backward classes. It had also held that there should not be reservations to the post of Mukhiya of a Gram Panchayat, Pramukh of a Panchayat Samiti and Adhyaksha of a Zilla Parishad on the ground that these are solitary posts and such reservation would amount to 100% reservation. The Government of Bihar has filed a SLP in the Supreme Court challenging the aforesaid orders of the Hon'ble High Court. The Hon'ble Supreme Court on an application by Government of Bihar, clarified on 29.8.2000 that the Government of Bihar may hold elections in the State in accordance with the law as it stands subject to the final decision of the Supreme Court in the pending appeal. It was subsequently clarified on 5.1.2001 by the Hon'ble Supreme Court that as certain provisions of the Constitution had been struck down by the Patna High Court, such provisions could not be treated as existing law unless those are restored by the Apex Court. Based on the orders of the Apex Court, the Government of Bihar held Panchayat elections in April, 2001 without providing for reservation for SCs/STs/Women to the offices of Chairperson at all the three levels of